

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-19 are all the claims pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended to recite the presence of N and Al. Claims 10 and 11 have been amended to add the unit of measurement ( $^{\circ}\text{C/hr}$ ) for  $V_R$ . In addition, claims 6 and 10 have been amended to depend from claim 1. Further, new dependent claims corresponding to claims 2-5 and depending from claims 6 and 10 have been added.

Entry of the above amendments is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over JP '443 or JP '188.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the reasons of record. That is, the cited references are silent regarding the content of nitrogen. For at least this reason, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are patentable over the cited art. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In addition, the Examiner indicated that if claims 1-5 were allowed, claims 6-11 would be rejoined and examined on the merits.

With respect to "critical bainitic velocity", it is known in the art that this critical velocity is the minimum value for the cooling speed which is necessary to obtain a bainitic structure after quenching, *i.e.*, to obtain a bainitic structure, the cooling speed after austenitization has to be higher than the critical bainitic velocity which depends on the chemical composition of the steel. It is possible to determine this critical velocity by using continuous cooling transformation diagrams, which are well known in the art. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of skill in the art would understand the meaning and scope of the claims and that the claims are definite.

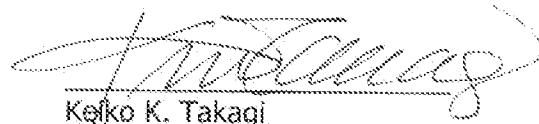
Further, claims 10 and 11 have been amended to recite the unit of measurement for  $V_R$  and claims 6 and 10 have been amended so as to singly depend from claim 1.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-19 is respectfully requested.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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